

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 019288

15

ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 SAJ-01 SS-20 NSC-10 SPC-03 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01

SY-10 NIC-01 H-03 /108 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:WDYESS:CR

APPROVED BY EUR:JAARMITAGE

EUR/SOV: JFMATLOCK

EUR/P:MR. JERABEK

----- 127971

R 292324Z JAN 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR UR US

SUBJECT: JOSELOFF INCIDENT

REF: MOSCOW 01270 AND PREVIOUS

1. DEPARTMENT CALLED IN SOVIET EMBASSY MINISTER COUNSELOR VORONTSOV ON JANUARY 28 TO REINFORCE COMPLAINT EMBASSY LODGED WITH MFA JANUARY 26 ON KGB TREATMENT OF JOSELOFF. SOV DIRECTOR MATLOCK ASKED VORONTSOV FOR AN EXPLANATION.

2. VORONTSOV ASSERTED THAT JOSELOFF HAD DISTRIBUTED QUESTIONNAIRE TO INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WHICH ASKED PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS SUCH AS WHY RECIPIENTS DID NOT DEMONSTRATE AGAINST SOVIET GOVERNMENT. VORONTSOV SAID THAT JOSELOFF'S ACTIONS WERE REGRETTABLE, BUT TYPICAL OF RECENT ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN REPORTERS IN THE USSR. ACCORDING TO VORONTSOV, AMERICAN REPORTERS WERE TRYING TO CREATE EVENTS ON WHICH SENSATIONAL NEWS STORIES COULD BE FILED.

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PAGE 02 STATE 019288

HE SAID THAT SOVIETS ARE "SICK AND TIRED" OF DISTORTED

REPORTING IN AMERICAN PRESS WHICH CONCENTRATED ON THREE POINTS ONLY: JEWS, SOLZHENITSYN, SAKHAROV. HE CLAIMED THAT 90 PER CENT OF US PRESS ITEMS ON SOVIET UNION WERE EXCLUSIVELY ON THESE SUBJECTS. JOSELOFF'S DISTRIBUTION OF PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE WAS AN EXAMPLE OF ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS WHICH SOVIET AUTHORITIES WOULD NO LONGER TOLERATE. FOR THAT REASON JOSELOFF HAD BEEN

WARNED.

3. IN REPLY, MATLOCK SAID THAT OUR INFORMATION INDICATED CLEARLY THAT JOSELOFF WAS CARRYING OUT NORMAL JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITY AND NOTHING MORE. HE TOLD VORONTSOV THAT WE HAD SEEN NOT ONE SHRED OF EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ASSERTION THAT JOSELOFF OR OTHER US CORRESPONDENTS WERE ATTEMPTING TO CREATE INCIDENTS. THEY SOMETIMES RECEIVED TIPS ON PLANNED EVENTS OF NEWS INTEREST AND IT WAS NORMAL JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE TO FOLLOW-UP SUCH LEADS. SOVIET ACTION TO SUPPRESS CORRESPONDENTS RESULTED IN MORE DAMAGING STORIES THAN THE EVENTS THEMSELVES WOULD HAVE PRODUCED.

4. MATLOCK CONTINUED THAT CORRESPONDENTS OFTEN DIG UP NEWS STORIES THAT APPEAR CRITICAL TO AUTHORITIES. HE THEN READ FROM TEXT OF TENDENTIOUS PIECE BY TASS CORRESPONDENT BASKAKOV ON JANUARY 22 ABOUT WOUNDED KNEE TRIAL IN ST. PAUL. MATLOCK STRESSED THAT HE DID NOT CITE ARTICLE IN SPIRIT OF PROTEST, BUT ONLY AS ONE EXAMPLE OF WAY IN WHICH SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS, IN OUR VIEW, DISTORT EVENTS IN THE US. NEVERTHELESS, WE FACILITATE THEIR TRAVEL AND DO NOT THREATEN THEM.

5. REFERRING TO REPORTS OF POSSIBLE EXPULSION OF JOSELOFF, MATLOCK EXPRESSED HOPE THESE STEMMED FROM OFF-THE-CUFF REMARKS. THROWING JOURNALISTS OUT CERTAINLY WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO DETENTE. VORONTSOV REPLIED THAT REFERENCE TO EXPULSION WAS WARNING ONLY, BUT ONE WHICH SOVIETS WOULD CARRY THROUGH IF JOURNALISTS PERSISTED IN IMPERMISSIBLE ACTIVITY. VORONTSOV SAID IT WAS UP TO AMERICAN EMBASSY TO BRIEF US CORRESPONDENTS ON WHAT THEY SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT DO IN THE SOVIET UNION. MATLOCK REPLIED THAT AMERICAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 019288

JOURNALISTS COULD NOT BE CONTROLLED IN THIS FASHION, AND REITERATED THAT WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT JOSELOFF WAS ENGAGED IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN LEGITIMATE NEWS GATHERING.

6. MATLOCK THEN MENTIONED EMBASSY'S DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING APPOINTMENT WITH MFA PRESS DIVISION. VORONTSOV SAID HE FULLY AGREED THAT MFA OFFICIALS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE WHEN APPOINTMENTS REQUESTED AND VOLUNTEERED THAT "THIS IS

PROBLEM I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT., KISSINGER

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